

# **ARGUMENT TALK PROTOCOL**

**From the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project & ETS**

## **Directions for Students**

### **1. Set up Argument & Consider Background Knowledge - T Chart (make notes) (5 min)**

- Overall, would you argue that rats are useful friends to humans or dangerous foes?
- List evidence for your ideas.

### **2. Listen and Gather Information (7 min)**

- Collect evidence toward both arguments as you listen.
- As you listen to the text, try to suspend judgment and collect evidence for both sides. You should be able to argue either way. Be alert to juicy quotes and statistics.
- Try two-column note taking strategy. Evidence could sit on either side and so you could draw arrow across columns.
- (BIAS) Sometimes it's helpful to say what your folk knowledge and emotional attachment is to this topic to begin with as we are often unaware of how much we're filtering information.

### **3. Position yourself (2 min)**

- Pick a side.
- Stand here if you are on one side (pro), and there if on the other (con), in the middle if you could go either way or you are good at arguing.
- Introduce yourself from the person across from you. This is your opponent.

### **4. Caucus with your side (groups of 4-5/ 5 minutes)**

- Develop your argument, sort and weigh evidence, and rehearse. Note that each of you will be arguing with an opponent.
- Jot notes or an outline.

### **5. Face your opponents (2 min/ 1 minute each)**

- Match up and make your argument to your opponent
- No comments or questions; can take notes

### **6. Feedback (2 min/ 1 minute each)**

- Tell opponent the best, most persuasive, compelling points or parts of the argument.
- “Of everything you just said, the best point was....”

7. **Caucus with your side to plan rebuttal** (5 min)

- What were the opposition’s strongest arguments and how can our side rebut?
- A rebuttal should not just be a restatement of your initial argument! It must take on the opponent’s argument.

8. **Rebuttal** with opponent (1 min each)

9. **Nuanced Claim** (5 min)

- Brainstorm a possible position C. This is a position that is more complex and nuanced than your last position.
- Each person should share a possible position C statements and then the group nominates one to share out.

10. **Debrief** (5 min)

11. **Angling for audience** (5 min)

- Pro group teams up; con group teams up.
- Groups assigned a panel audience for their argument.
- Discuss what evidence you would use and how you might sequence it for this particular audience.

**WHOLE GROUP DEBRIEF (5 min)**

12. As a learner in the task, what were the challenges?
13. How, if at all, did being assigned a particular audience impact your arguments?